

UPDATE ON CTR EMPLOYER SPECIAL SURVEY

BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the
February 2003 Transportation Commission Meeting

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PURPOSE:

Brief the Commission on the results of a survey of employers participating in Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) to assess potential impacts of three levels of state and local funding for the CTR Program. The survey was requested by the CTR Task Force.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

Provide a basis for discussion.

BACKGROUND:

The Commission's current law budget provided \$5.5M for the CTR Program 2003–2005. The Governor's budget eliminates \$5.5 M in funding for the CTR Program 2003–2005. The Governor believes that the cut will have minimal short-term impacts because a sampling of major employers will continue trip reduction at their worksites whether or not there's a program to support them. The Governor's Office did not provide specific information about the level of continued participation. The Governor's new law proposal supports and expands the program.

At the January 9 meeting of the CTR Task Force, members requested that WSDOT staff survey employers to assess the potential impacts of three levels of support. The Task Force is preparing a 2003 report that will answer the Legislature's question as to whether the program should be continued, modified, or terminated.

The survey gathered information about employers' reactions to the possibility of having their technical support from local jurisdictions and the state continue at the same level, increase, or be eliminated. WSDOT used its database of 1,100 worksites to generate a random sample, including all sizes of affected employers, geographically distributed.

A research firm managed the special survey of CTR employers. Employee contact names were supplied by the local jurisdictions that work directly with employers. The research firm made every effort to make two contacts at each worksite: one individual or manager directly involved with the program and one person from upper management or budget.

State Funding

Sixty-nine cities and counties received \$3.9 million from WSDOT in 2001–2003 to carry out the CTR Program. Jurisdictions work with employers to help them develop trip reduction programs appropriate for each employer's situation. Jurisdictions also work with WSDOT in providing training and information to transportation coordinators at employer worksites and in developing data used to measure progress toward goals. In 2001–2003, cities and counties invested an estimated \$6 million of their own money in CTR Programs.

WSDOT provides technical assistance as defined in state law to jurisdictions, state agencies, and employers. Technical assistance includes problem solving, training, support with data collection and analysis, and maintaining networks of partners and documentation on best practices.

WSDOT also measures the impacts of CTR. The investments WSDOT has made in measuring the program provide tangible benefits for WSDOT and other government organizations. The City of Bellevue, for example, uses the CTR data collection process to monitor their comprehensive plan's commute mode goals. Achieving these goals allows for continued economic development in their city. WSOT uses CTR data in project and corridor planning including the I405 and TransLake studies.

DISCUSSION:

The Governor's assumption that cutting CTR funding would have minimal short-term impacts doesn't take into account that many worksite programs are not mature and currently rely on guidance from local jurisdictions. Some employers told the CTR Task Force in 2001 that if the state signals a loss of interest in trip reduction, they will no longer support it.

Some major employers—including Weyerhaeuser, SAFECO, The Boeing Company, and University of Washington—were doing trip reduction prior to the CTR statute in 1991. They will continue to support trip reduction because it produces business benefits in the form of improved employee retention and reduced expenses for parking.

The presentation at the February 19 meeting will detail the results of the survey. However, early indications suggest that there is a strong correlation between state investment in CTR and active participation at the employer level.

For Further Information

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